



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2016/22/2034
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	June 1986
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	3 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

INTERVIEW WITH GARRET FITZGERALD

Gary  
for PA 87  
N

CG: Let's turn to the Stalker question. It's said that you're going to raise that with Mrs. Thatcher when you see outside the formal doors of the EEC Summit at the Hague, what impression would you like to convey to her?

GF: Well I haven't said that, the question is off beam. We have never arranged a meeting.

CH: Are you disconcerted by the developments on Mr. Stalker?

GF: Well, concerned about them. Our concern goes back to the root of the problem, to the fact that in a number of cases in Northern Ireland evidence was given and suggesting that in a number of incidents there was a shoot to kill policy. And sworn evidence was given that in pursuit of those actions, however you may describe them the RUC penetrated into the Republic pursuing particular people without any first contact with our security forces here. These are matters that concern us deeply. They are potentially very damaging to cooperation between North and South. I have to say that they are matters that lie in the past, but they have never been fully clarified and it is important that they be clarified. The Stalker inquiry was designed to clarify these issues. And we have an interest, therefore, in the result of this inquiry. And a concern that it should be completed without delay and in a manner that will carry conviction, particularly with the minority community in Northern Ireland who are deeply disturbed by these killings.

CH: The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mr. Tom King, had to apologise to you in the House of Commons last week. Do you accept his apologies for misleading you on the "state of play" with respect to the Stalker report?

GF: Well actually it was Nicholas Scott, in the House of Commons debate and he referred to the fact that there had been misinformation on this particular point. We had been informed the 4th of June and subsequently at a meeting at the conference that the report was the final report and that was confirmed to us even after in the House of Commons when the opposite had been stated. So there was a good deal of confusion. It was only a couple of days ago that it was cleared up and it became clear that the report is labelled an interim report, because there are certain further inquiries to be completed which have been delayed since last August and which we would hope will not be delayed any further.

CH: But isn't this whole affair a bit of embarrassment within the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the upcoming marching season a period of high Loyalist emotion in the North, that this issue can't really be dealt with in a straightforward way as you would wish it to be?

GF: I think the delays are a matter of concern. The fact that the report was produced last August with certain further interviews to be undertaken and nothing has happened since. It is certainly a matter of concern. I believe it is the intention of the British Government to carry this forward to an early conclusion. The recent events have been disturbing, in themselves and because of the confusion that arose in the information given to us by the British Government.

CH: Should that sort of thing really be happening within the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, isn't that agreement's credibility rather on the line when this kind of tangle can occur?

GF: Well, I explained this as being often difficult in any context for the normal diplomatic channels to get to the bottom of things and that within the bureaucratic system entanglements can arise and confusions and misunderstandings - it isn't the first time this has happened. But of course, in a matter as serious as this it does concern us, the degree of confusion that there has been and that the matter should have taken so long to be resolved, and that its resolution has recently been put in doubt in some measure by the actions that have happened. But I believe that it is the intention of the British Government to bring the inquiry to a conclusion so that the DPP in Northern Ireland can be in a position to decide what action to take if action be appropriate.

CH: But the initial part of that report has been sitting around gathering dust in Belfast for an awful long time. Aren't you inclined to be forceful on this particular issue given that the credibility of the security forces in Northern Ireland, with the minority community, the Catholics, is here at stake?

GF: We have had occasion to make inquiries about the delay at various points.

CH: Are you going to be more forceful now?

GF: We have been given assurances that the matter will be dealt with. And dealt with promptly so the DPP can determine what action to take.

CH: Do you personally have credibility in John Stalker as the leader of such an inquiry?

GF: Really that isn't a function for us to decide and he was appointed to undertake this inquiry, he brought it to a certain point, he had some further inquiries to make, the delay in making them is certainly disturbing, and the job now is to have those inquiries carried through. I don't want to comment on matters of internal affairs to the police forces of the United Kingdom.

CH: Is this something you think can be smoothed over then?

GF: I wouldn't say smoothed over, because that might carry some implications. It is a matter that can be resolved by the report being completed and the DPP being able to decide what action if any it should take.

GARRET FITZGERALD INTERVIEW..3/..

CH: Would you expect prosecutions in that case?

GF: I haven't seen the evidence, therefore I don't know. I expect the DPP when he has the evidence before him to take an impartial decision as to whether to prosecute certain people, that's a matter for him that hitherto he has been unable to do so because over this period of time he has not been allowed to have the evidence which he needs for the purpose. It's important for the confidence of all of us in the islands, in the security situation in Northern Ireland that the matter be resolved.

\* \* \*

CH: Have you been disconcerted by the whole Stalker affair?

CH: Well the British Government was forced in the Commons to apologise to you for misleading you. Do you accept those apologies?

CH: How much of an embarrassment has the Stalker Affair been?

CH: But doesn't all this come at a very bad time, when the Anglo-Irish agreement's credibility is at stake and when the marching season in the North, a period of high loyalist emotion is just around the corner?

CH: But Stalker's interim report which is thought to suggest that there should be prosecutions of RUC has been gathering dust in Belfast since it was submitted at the end of last year.

CH: Do you yourself have faith in John Stalker as the leader of this inquiry?

CH: So you would expect prosecutions in this case?

CH: So do you see it therefore as an affair that can just be smoothed over between the two governments?

CH: Are you inclined now to be more forceful, given the fact that the credibility of your government and the Anglo-Irish agreement is rather on the line as far as the Catholic community in Northern Ireland is concerned?